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an account of the conspicuous differences between *Acer saccharinum* and its so-called variety *nigrum*, giving figures of the characteristic dissimilarities in foliage and fruit.<sup>1</sup> The statement was made that the two maples are evidently specifically distinct. At all events, they are so unlike in general appearance that they may be recognized at a glance at a distance of four or five rods. In ornamental value they are clearly different. A new study of trees in flower and in young foliage also reveals characteristic differences. In my judgment the two are distinct species. I have not been able to detect intermediate forms. The following characterizations will separate them.

*Acer saccharinum* Wangenheim.—Leaves three to five-lobed, the sinuses narrow and deep, the lobes furnished with large and long-acuminate teeth, glabrous, plane, rather thin, the basal sinus open; stipules, none: nodes of the young shoots usually reddish: inflorescence smooth or nearly so; bracts none or minute: staminate flowers somewhat campanulate; the calyx two lines or less in length: lobes of the fruit little spreading.

*Acer nigrum* Michaux.—Leaves larger, three-lobed, the sinuses very broad and shallow, the lobes entire or very bluntly toothed, the apex not so prominently acuminate, pubescent or villous beneath and also on the petiole when young, limp, the sides conspicuously drooping, thick and soft, the basal sinus usually closed or the lobes overlapping and causing the leaf to appear slightly peltate; stipules conspicuous, foliaceous and ciliate, early caducous;<sup>2</sup> nodes of the young shoots not colored: inflorescence pubescent or villous; the bracts conspicuous and ciliate: staminate flowers cylindrical; the calyx two and a half or more lines long: fruit smaller, the lobes usually diverging.—In aspect this species is much heavier and duller than the other, owing to the drooping and wilted appearance of the large cloth-like leaves.—L. H. BAILEY, *Agricultural College, Mich.*

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## EDITORIAL.

IT IS THOUGHT by some to be desirable for every form of scientific work to have its center at Washington. The reason for this is partly sentimental, for it sounds large to have a "national" museum or a "national" herbarium, and partly financial, for it is argued that only the government can support such things in any worthy way. The financial reason is a good one, as any one will concede, for that government which has given its fostering care most liberally to scientific work has to-day

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<sup>1</sup>*Popular Gardening*, Nov. 1881, 24, 4 figs.

<sup>2</sup>Observations upon the occurrence of stipules in this species are also recorded in *Amer. Nat.*, vi, 767, vii, 422, and by Wheeler, *Mich. Cat.*, 23.

the proud satisfaction of seeing the scientific world flocking to its doors to learn wisdom. Our government has already given enough money to scientific work in botany and agriculture to have shown great results if rightly directed; but the results have mainly been a few padded "reports" of aimless experiments and meaningless lists and centennial "displays." Periodical "reports," gotten up with the sole idea of having every one so many pages long, or with the inspiring thought that it is so many pages longer than the last one, and "displays," express the whole desire and appreciation of our government with respect to scientific work. It is not the fault of our brethren who have the good fortune to be "government" scientists, for they are good men and anxious to do good work. But there is a factor in the whole organization of such scientific work which is fatal to good results, necessarily so; and that is, that every position is filled and every position held by that hobgoblin "political influence." When they who hold the appointing power use it to fill scientific positions for political reasons, it is hardly likely that any "science" that the world will hear of will be the result. If half of the attachés in such "centers of work" are not so much mere rubbish in the way of the other half who have the ability to work, we are much mistaken, although we may have the proportion wrong. Our plea, then, is for politics to be banished, along with the "rubbish" referred to, reports not demanded until there is something to report, the "show business" given over to perfectly capable but less scientific hands, and the specialist thus be given leisure to do work that will be a credit to himself and the government that is paying for it.

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## OPEN LETTERS.

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### White flowered *Linum perenne*.

The instances are very numerous in which species both of animals and plants which exist in the colder regions of British America and on the mountains of Europe are common also to the elevated portions of Colorado; and it was therefore with peculiar interest that I recognized in the white-flowered form of *Linum perenne*, stated by Prof. Jas. Macoun (p. 116) to be characteristic of James Bay and Hudson Bay, a form I have myself met with in Colorado. The typical form of *L. perenne* is common in Colorado at about 8,000 feet, but above 9,000 its place is taken by a somewhat lower variety, with deeper blue petals, and, although the white form is also alpine, I only met with it on one occasion, near the boundary line between Montrose and Gunnison counties. It would be interesting to learn whether this variety exists at all in the northern or alpine regions of Europe.

THEO. D. A. COCKERELL.

*West Cliff, Colorado.*

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### *Buchloe dactyloides*.

Ever since Nuttall, in 1818, wrote of it, *Buchloe dactyloides* Engelm. has been recognized as one of the best forage grasses of the plains. For-